

Irregularities are with regulator

Caab director trains with US-Bangla fund, flies its plane; civil aviation ministry itself violates int'l aviation rules to legalise his actions

SVED ASHFAQUL HAQUE and RASHIDUL HASAN

It is a brazen example of how a certain job becomes no-holds-barred in the Civil Aviation Authority of Bangladesh (Caab), the regulatory body of the civil airlines.

He is the man mandated to keep the private airlines under the safety and regulation scanner of the Caab. He is as well the man who has received an amount no less than \$30,000 from a private operator to foot the bill of his overseas training and is flying their planes to add scores to his personal profile.

Yet, you cannot blame Wing Commander Chowdhury Md Zia-Ul-Kabir, the director of flight safety and regulations. It's simply because he is authorised to operate beyond organisational rules and international regulations.

A letter, dated 29.12.2016, of the civil aviation and tourism ministry permitted Zia to receive financial assistance from the US-



Zia-Ul-Kabir

Bangla Airlines Ltd and take part in a "type rating" training on Boeing 737 in Indonesia from January 1 to 19 last year.

Signed by an Assistant Secretary, Md Abdur Rashid, the letter states, "All expenses in connection with the visit will be borne by the US Bangla Airlines Ltd."

The Daily Star has obtained a copy of the letter.

The exact amount of money that Zia had taken from the US-Bangla authorities could not be confirmed. But the fee for a "type rating" training in Indonesia is around \$26,000, and the amount should be no less than \$30,000 including accommodation, food and conveyance bills.

The ministry's generosity did not end there. "He will be treated as on duty during the period of this visit. He will draw his pay, allowances and other charges," the letter adds.

However, with this training, Zia now qualifies to fly that particular model of Boeing anywhere in the world. But with this

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City buses give each other almost no room as they try to elbow their way to the next stop first to pick up passengers at the Jatiya Press Club yesterday. The scratches and dents on all of them bear the evidence. Such a race cost college student Rajib Hossain dearly. His arm had to be amputated after it got lodged between two buses at Banglamotor on Tuesday. Story on page 2. PHOTO: AMRAN HOSSAIN/PROTHOM ALO

Burial mix-up

2 Nepal crash victims laid to rest in wrong graves; court orders exhumation

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

After the bodies of Boishakhi Television journalist Ahmed Faisal and Ms Nazia Afrin Chowdhury, two victims of the US-Bangla plane crash in Kathmandu, were brought to the country, a mix-up occurred. The two bodies ended up being buried in the wrong burial sites as the coffins seemed to have been bearing the wrong names.

The families of both victims appealed for exhumation of the bodies.

A Dhaka court yesterday ordered the exhumation of the body of Ahmed Faisal from Banani graveyard in the presence of an executive magistrate.

The petition for the court appeal submitted by Faisal's younger brother Saiful Islam on April 3 said that the coffin bearing the name of Ahmed Faisal was received by his maternal uncle Md Kaikobad and taken to his village in Shariatpur for burial.

After the namaz-e-janaza, prayers and the paying of final respect by the villagers, the body was taken out of the coffin to be

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BONE MARROW TRANSPLANT UNIT AT DMCH Shortage of funds, staff making its job difficult

PORIMOL PALMA

Haizur Rahman Himel, a first-year student of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, might have had a very different life if not for the doctors at the Bone Marrow Transplant (BMT) unit of Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH).

Haizur had been suffering from acute myeloid leukaemia, a type of cancer in the blood-forming cells of the bone marrow that could turn fatal if not treated. However, doctors at the hospital replaced Haizur's damaged bone marrow -- the soft and spongy tissue inside the bones -- with healthy bone marrow stem cells.

Bangladesh's first BMT unit was established on October 20, 2013, following the model of US' Massachusetts General Hospital (MGH) of Harvard Medical School, making it an international standard BMT facility.

"I am doing fine, and doing my classes," said Himel, 20, a student of civil engineering, who came from a lower middle-income family in Pirojpur.

Himel, who was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukaemia in 2012, struggled to finance his treat-

ment. However, his family learned of the BMT facility at DMCH in 2014. They took him there and the hospital treated him at a comparatively lower cost.

"In India, the cost of my treatment would be more than Tk 25 lakh and much more in other countries. Here, we could do it for around Tk 10 lakh," he told this correspondent recently.

Himel is one of only 35 patients who availed BMT at the DMCH.

AN UNFOLDING CRISIS However, the facility, recognised by Indian third party inspectors as the best BMT facility in South Asia in 2014, now finds itself in a crisis.

Doctors said at least nine physicians, five technologists and 75 nurses for the BMT unit have been trained in collaboration with the MGH and AK Khan Healthcare Trust.

The facility has the capacity to conduct BMT of at least 50 patients a year provided that all the logistics, machinery, maintenance and finance are arranged regularly. But, that has not been the case for DMCH's BMT unit.

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BUSINESS



CASHLESS SHOPPING & DINING

Digital payments have seen tremendous growth in Bangladesh. Only in 2016, people made 180 crore transactions worth Tk 23 lakh crore in Bangladesh, Bangladesh Institute of Bank Management said in a study. The amount of transactions has seen exponential growth in

SEE PAGE 11 COL 4 MORE IN STAR BUSINESS

Banks may face bigger crisis

Inefficiency in banking sector led to Tk 10,000 crore loss in 2016-17, estimates think-tank

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government decision to slash the cash reserve ratio and allow state-run enterprises to keep half their funds with private banks may lead to a bigger crisis in the already under-pressure banking sector, said a think-tank yesterday.

The banking sector is now characterised by weak regulation and monitoring and no visible punishment for irregularities under political patronage, said the South Asian Network on Economic Modeling (SANEM), a Dhaka-based research organisation.

"Also, the lack of independence of the Bangladesh Bank intensified the problem."

The organisation made the remarks in its April quarterly review of Bangladesh economy unveiled at a programme at the Westin hotel in the capital. Prof Selim Raihan, executive director of SANEM, made a presentation on the review.

It estimated that the current level of inefficiency in the banking sector was leading to a loss in GDP by about 1 percent annually, equivalent to about Tk 10,000 crore in 2016-17.

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Canada should welcome Rohingya refugees

Suggests Trudeau's special envoy to Myanmar

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Canada should welcome Rohingya refugees and encourage other nations to do the same, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's special envoy to Myanmar said in his final report.

"Canada should signal a willingness to welcome refugees from the Rohingya community both in Bangladesh and Myanmar and should encourage a discussion among like-minded countries to do the same," Bob Rae said in the

report, presented at a press conference in Ottawa on Tuesday.

However, he said, this in no way lessens the obligations of Myanmar to accept responsibility for the departure in such violent circumstances of the Rohingya population from their homes.

Rae also said Canada should take a leadership role in responding to the Rohingya crisis by ramping up humanitarian aid, development efforts. It also should lead an international effort to

investigate and collect the "clear evidence" of crimes against humanity in Myanmar.

He recommended that Canada maintain targeted economic sanctions against individuals responsible "for the abuses of human rights and the crimes against humanity in Myanmar."

"But one thing is certain: if we fail to try, the results will be far worse than if we make the necessary effort," he said,

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"The lesson of history is that genocide is not an event like a bolt of lightning; it is a process, one that starts with hate speech and the politics of exclusion, then moves to discrimination, then policies of removal, and then finally to a sustained drive to physical extermination."



BOB RAE

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